

Claims

[c1] 1. A marketplace system operated by a sponsor, the system interconnecting users having respective workstations and transmitting messages among the users, the system comprising means responsive to first inputs from the sponsor for authorizing participation by particular users; the system comprising means responsive to second inputs from users indicative of their wish to communicate, send, or receive data from the marketplace system; the system responsive to a second input from a first user indicative of a wish to send first data by validating said first data, and in the event the first data are validated, receiving the first data; the system responsive to receipt of the first data by returning second data to an inbox or output device on the workstation of the first user.

[c2] 2. A network of networks comprising workstations associated with users, the network comprising communicative means communicating messages among the users, each message containing information indicative of a putative sender, each workstation comprising working memory and further comprising means keeping program files on the workstation isolated from data files on the workstation, the means blocking a received message from being allowed into the working memory thereof except after verification that the message was originated by an authorized user and is of a predetermined valid message type; the network further comprising means echoing the received message back to its putative sender, the means further responsive to a repudiation notice from the putative sender for deleting the message.

[c3] 3. A marketplace network of networks interconnecting marketplace systems for passage of messages each message having a sender and a recipient, each marketplace system having associated users and having a respective arrangement of user identifiers, user names, and passwords, each marketplace system having an associated system identifier; the marketplace systems characterized in that a user may use the same identifier, user name, and password in more than one marketplace system; each message comprising information indicative of the system identifier of the system

within which the message originates; the network further characterized in that the sender of a message includes a specific system identifier, whereby the network sends the message to the recipient as a user on the system associated with the specific system identifier.

- [c4] 4. A marketplace network of networks interconnecting marketplace systems for passage of messages each message having a message type, a sender and a recipient, each marketplace system having associated users and having a respective arrangement of user identifiers, user names, and passwords, each marketplace system having an associated system identifier; the marketplace systems characterized in that a user may use the same identifier, user name, and password in more than one marketplace system; the network comprising means transferring messages from a first marketplace system to a second marketplace system, the network further comprising means responsive to the event of a message's message type not being allowed by the second marketplace system for communicating a notice of failure of delivery, the notice comprising information indicative of message types compatible with the marketplace system of the sender and with the marketplace system of the recipient.
- [c5] 5. A network of networks system interconnecting marketeers and users, each user having a hard drive, the system comprising means receiving permissions and withdrawals of permission from particular users with respect to particular marketeers, the system further comprising means permitting transmission of a cookie from a marketeer to a user's data storage/retrieval memory only if the marketeer has permission to do so and only if such permission has not yet been withdrawn.
- [c6] 6. A network of networks interconnecting users entering and receiving messages, the network comprising means maintaining a complete audit trail for every message entered or received.
- [c7] 7. A network of networks interconnecting users sending and receiving messages, the network defining designations of subsets of all users

indicative of needs of the users in the subsets, the network comprising means responsive to a first user sending a message and responsive to selection by the first user of one or more subsets, for distributing the message to users in the selected subsets, the network further comprising means responsive to a second user indicating unwantedness of certain messages for screening out the reception of the message.